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ABSTRACT

As part of a review of emphases in high school and college language-arts curricula, the American College Testing Program sponsored an invitational language-arts conference at its national office, in February 1976. The eight conference participants were selected to represent various fields of specialization and several institutional affiliations. From their various perspectives emerged a consensus that provides an overview of the domain of the language arts and that enumerates the skills essential to success in college writing experiences. Tackling the distinction between the traditional "basics" and other goals that have more to do with intellectual competence suggests some guidelines for defining "basic skills," for assigning classroom priorities, and for assessing language. The report includes summaries of the responses of the eight participants to detailed questionnaires about goals and processes in the language arts, as well as the texts of position papers prepared by each participant. (AA)

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What's REALLY Basic in Language Arts?

A Report on ACT's 1976 Invitational Language Arts Conference

Renee M. Huntley

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Iowa City, Iowa

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What's REALLY Basic in Language Arts?

A Report on ACT's 1976 Invitational Language Arts Conference

ABSTRACT

The American College Testing Program (ACT) is continually involved in searching out the impacts of curricular change on all of its assessment programs. As part of its current review of emphases in high school and college language arts curricula, ACT sponsored an invitational language arts conference at its national office in February 1976.

Not only have changes occurred in the content, form, and focus of both high school and college English classes over the past few years, but English educators have also had to contend with the public outcry over the reading and writing effectiveness of today's students. In so doing, they are taking a new look at the discipline and reviewing its conceptual structure.

To determine the effect of these concerns on the classroom, ACT selected as conference participants eight language arts educators who represented various fields of specialization and institutional affiliation. From this variety of perspectives emerged a consensus that provides a comprehensive view of the language arts domain, that enumerates the skills essential to probable success in college writing experiences, and that clarifies the governing processes of the field. A consensus like this from within the discipline, by tackling the distinction between the traditional "basics" and some others that have more to do with intellectual competence, suggests some guidelines for defining "basic skills," for assigning classroom priorities, and for assessing language. This report describes that consensus and its implications for students, teachers, administrators, and testers.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I

INTRODUCTION 1

Rationale for Conference 1
Specific Objectives 2

II

PROCEDURES 2

Participants 2
Conference Preparation 3
The Position Papers 3
The Questionnaire 4
Conference Sessions 5

III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 6

The Questionnaire 7
Table IA--Major Content Areas 7
Table IB--Major Content Areas 9
Tables IIA, IIB, and III--Usage/Mechanics 12
Tables IIA and IIB--Usage/Mechanics 13
Table III--Usage/Mechanics 16
Table IVA--Writing and Critical Reading 20
Table IVB--Writing and Critical Reading 23
Table VA--Writing and Critical Reading 25
Table VB--Taxonomy of Composing Skills 31

IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 33

Review of Conference Goals 33
Principal Outcomes 33

V

APPENDICES 35

Appendix 1--Position Papers 35
Appendix 2--Keynote Address 67
Appendix 3--Résumés 79
Appendix 4--Bibliography 81

What's REALLY Basic?

A Report on ACT's Invitational Language Arts Conference

I Introduction

Rationale for Conference

The American College Testing Program (ACT) provides data from many of its assessment programs that are used by students, teachers, and counselors to make educational decisions about admissions, course placement, and program planning. Since the relevance of the ACT tests depends on their content reflecting current classroom practices, ACT engages in periodic evaluation of the curricula to maintain that currency and thereby maximize the value of the ACT tests for educational decision making. Thus ACT convened an invitational language arts conference at its national office in February 1976 as one phase of its current review of the language arts curriculum. Subject matter specialists were assembled to provide a range of interest that would reflect the many components of the language arts domain. From this variety of perspectives ACT hoped to gain a comprehensive view of the domain; this report describes the results of the conference.

Specific Objectives

Given the fact that many of the ACT assessment programs have language arts components and given the changing content, form, and focus of both high school and college English classes during the past few years, ACT's content review of the language arts seems particularly timely. Responding to public demands for an accounting that has been provoked, in great part, by the sensational interest of the media, concerned and responsible English educators are taking a new look at their discipline. They must cope with the uncertain

status of writing in the curriculum, the "students' right to their own language," bi-dialectalism, the proliferation of electives, a changing student body, sociopolitical pressures, appeals for a return to the "basics," public confusion over the nature of those basics, and finally the increasingly manipulative and dishonest use of language in society. Within this uncertain climate and despite the inevitable time-lag between professional research and its translation into classroom practice, educators are attempting to reaffirm their faith in a shared conceptual structure of the discipline.

To determine the effect of issues like these on the classroom, ACT selected as conference participants eight language arts educators who represented various fields of specialization and institutional affiliation. Within highly structured work sessions, ACT aimed to achieve among participants a consensus that would 1) describe the current curricula, 2) project likely curricular changes within the next five years, 3) enumerate the skills essential to probable success in writing experiences in college, 4) and even define the discipline. Such a consensus could not only clarify classroom priorities but also profoundly affect the nature of language assessment.

II Procedures

Participants

The educators participating in the conference had been recommended to ACT by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), and Dr. Richard Lloyd-Jones, Chairperson of the Department of English at the University of Iowa, in his role as ACT's conference consultant. This distinguished assembly included: Ms. Evelyn Copeland, Educational Consultant in English and Humanities at Fairfield University; Dr. Edmund J. Farrell, Associate Executive Secretary of

the NCTE; Dr. Allan Glatthorn, Director of Teacher Preparation at the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Richard Lloyd-Jones, Chairperson of the Department of English at the University of Iowa; Dr. Walter D. Loban, English Education specialist at the University of California at Berkeley; Ms. Elisabeth McPherson, the Chairperson of the Humanities Division at Forest Park Community College; Dr. Geneva Smitherman, Assistant Director of the Center for Black Studies at Wayne State University; and Dr. Robert S. Wachal, Chairperson of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Iowa.[1]

Conference Preparation

To prepare for the conference, ACT requested that participants complete several documents before their arrival. These documents, which were circulated among participants and ACT staff before the conference, were designed to focus thinking on the topics to be discussed, to establish the varying viewpoints and backgrounds of the assembled individuals, and to help explain current issues and attitudes. Detailed below, the documents consist of 1) a position paper describing recent and future trends in the curriculum and 2) a questionnaire listing content elements in language arts curricula.

The Position Papers -- Since many of the ACT assessment programs are designed to facilitate the student's transition from high school to college, participants prepared in advance position papers responding to ACT's request that they 1) identify the recent changes they had perceived in the high schools and 2) describe the corresponding impact on college classes. These position

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[1] More extensive resumes can be found in Appendix 3, page 79.

papers helped not only to describe the backgrounds and viewpoints of the participants but also to define the curricula and to identify the skills essential to probable success in writing experiences in college.[1]

The Questionnaire -- The questionnaire, consisting of five tables, focused attention on content elements in language arts curricula, served as the means to develop the consensus on the state of the language arts, and defined the topics that would subsequently be discussed during the conference. Table I concerned the major areas of the entire curriculum (literature, reading, speaking/listening, usage, and writing). Table II concerned the major components of the subarea of usage. Table III concerned the skills involved in the subarea of usage. Table IV concerned the major components of the subareas of writing and critical reading. Table V concerned the skills involved in the subareas of writing and critical reading.

The participants were first charged with a general task: to rank the importance and emphasis currently given 1) the major areas of the entire curriculum (Table I) and 2) the major components of the three subareas that have traditionally fallen within the purview of the ACT Assessment (usage, writing, and critical reading--Tables II and IV). Their second task was more specific: to delineate the skills involved in usage,[2] writing, and critical reading (Tables III and V).

Participants were asked for two types of information: what they saw *actually* happening in the current language arts curricula, and what they felt *should be* happening. Answering only for the levels (high school or college)

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[1]The position papers are assembled in Appendix 1, page 35.

[2]Although usage can properly be viewed only in the context of total language skills, it is treated in the abstract as a point of departure.

with which they felt most familiar and from the unique perspective of their individual specialities, they rated the five tables: Table I on the relative importance of major content areas; Tables II and III on usage and mechanics; and Tables IV and V on writing and critical reading.

ACT's classification systems were the conventional ones of teaching content as the public would perceive it. The participants were invited to revise them to focus on the underlying processes that govern the field, which were reflected in their rankings and priorities. Consequently, and perhaps most significantly, the tables stimulated discussions during the work sessions that effectively contributed to ACT's understanding of those processes.

Conference Sessions

The two-day conference was structured into five work sessions, each of which had a specific purpose. During the first half-day session, which inaugurated the consensus-forming process, the participants were assigned to one of two discussion groups to review the questionnaire they had prepared before the conference. The makeup of each group was balanced so that each group equally reflected the diverse backgrounds represented in the whole group.[1] The participants were initially asked to weigh their responses to the questionnaire in terms of both high school and college curricula, and in terms of what actually was happening and what ideally should be happening. During the course of the conference, however, participants focused on the ideal college curriculum as the likeliest way to discover the nature of the discipline and its essential skills.

During the second half-day session, the participants met in a common discussion group to merge their ideas and deliberate an overall consensus. The

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[1] Dr. Glatthorn, Dr. Lloyd-Jones, Dr. Loban, and Dr. Wachal formed Group I; Ms. Copeland, Dr. Farrell, Ms. McPherson, and Dr. Smitherman formed Group II.

ACT staff, mainly serving as observers, asked for points of clarification.

During the third session, an evening one, Dr. Lloyd-Jones delivered an address on the state of the discipline[1] to invited members of Iowa Testing Programs and language arts educators from various Iowa schools, colleges, and universities. The primary objective of this open session was to share with area educators the opportunity for professional exchanges with ACT's staff and its distinguished visitors. Thus the address was followed by a discussion period in which all guests participated.

The fourth and fifth sessions were spent in completing the consensus, summarizing the previous sessions, and discussing the implications for the classroom and for the assessment of language.

III Results and Discussion

The documents and discussion arising from the conference activities are rich and complex sources of information. They offer more than suggestions merely about classroom practice, the English teacher's mission, or the nature of the discipline. They offer the context in which those suggestions, and many others, can be viewed, indeed must be viewed to grasp the relationship between the educators' current concerns and their perception of the field's governing processes. They offer generally what amounts to a value system, and they offer specifically the reflection of those values in concrete, finite objectives. In particular, the questionnaire and the discussion it provoked in the work sessions provide a conceptual framework of the discipline. A distillation of those sessions follows.

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[1] Dr. Lloyd-Jones's address is presented in Appendix 2, on page 67.

The Questionnaire

Serving to focus and delimit discussion, to help translate abstractions into observable classroom procedure, the questionnaire comprised five tables. They are presented below in the following order: for each table, the first version depicts the participants' original rankings prepared prior to the conference. The participants' revisions of ACT's categories are indicated in italics. The second version presents the consensus reached by the whole group in the work sessions. For Tables I, II, and IV rankings for each category were summed. The sums were ordered from low to high and then ranked so that the lowest sum received a rank of 1 and the highest sum received the highest ranking. In cases of tied rankings, responses were weighted in favor of the rankings of participants who were most familiar with the particular educational level or who were the content specialists for the particular area. For Tables III and V, the most frequent responses chosen by the group are checked; an asterisk indicates the instances where an even split in response occurred.

Table IA -- The participants' original rankings immediately follow.

TABLE IA

ACTUAL				MAJOR CONTENT AREAS	IDEAL			
High School		College			High School		College	
Group I	Group II	Group I	Group II		Group I	Group II	Group I	Group II
	1	1	3	Literature: reading, discussion, analysis, interpretation and evaluation of creative works; literary/poetic devices; *oral tradition; graffiti; media*	5	6	5	5
	3	2	2	Critical Reading: literal understanding, inferential understanding	4	5	3	2
	6	4	6	Reading: *varying* speed, comprehension, prereading, skimming, vocabulary, understanding and interpreting directions	3	4	4	6
	5	6	5	Speaking/Listening: recitation, public speaking, oral communication, debate, dramatization, notetaking; *role playing, group interaction*	1	3	2	4
	2	5	4	Usage/Mechanics: punctuation, grammar, sentence structure	6	7	6	7
	4	3	1	Writing: editing and composing (expressive and transactional)	2	2	1	3
				Other: *Nature and history of language and its use in social contexts*		1		1

It should be noted that, according to the participants, literature appears to receive primary emphasis in both high schools and colleges today; that usage/mechanics is heavily emphasized in high schools, but not in colleges; that critical reading and writing are more heavily stressed in college than in high school. The participants' individual views of the ideal situation, even at this early stage of conference activities, indicate a consensus ranking for high school of writing (second in importance), literature (next to last), and usage/mechanics (last).

Table IB -- The consensus reached by both groups for the ideal college curriculum is illustrated by Table IB.

Table IB

Major Content Areas

Consensus for Ideal College Priorities

Nature and history of language and its use in social contexts	1
Literature (broadly interpreted to include graffiti, media, etc.) Critical Reading (inferential) Reading (literal)	2-3
Writing	2-3
Speaking/Listening	4
Usage/Mechanics	5

The first point of consensus specifies that the primary concern of language curricula is the nature and history of language and its use in social contexts in writing, reading, and speaking. Language itself is the overwhelming, pervasive content. To be understood as such involves 1) the knowledge of how language works socially, psychologically, and intellectually; 2) the acknowledgment that appropriateness and social judgments are involved in the use of language; and 3) the awareness both of the source of one's attitudes toward language and of methods for rethinking those attitudes. Facts of language like these inform all the creative and interpretive modes for using language.

The second point of consensus was derived in a conciliatory way. The participants' specialities were inevitably reflected in their initial attempt to order priorities.[1] Moving under the content categories to extract the underlying process enabled the participants to resolve their initial differences, whereupon they determined that *critical perception* was the skill most essential to probable success in educational experiences.

The notion of critical perception is rather more comprehensive than that of critical thinking, which raises the image of merely a few logical paradigms. (More arguments depend upon emotional appeals and hidden assumptions than on nonsequiturs, for example.) Furthermore, given that education is a humane process, one that implies the expression of attitudes and feelings as well as cognitions, critical perception is meant to involve volition and emotion as well as intellection. Although critical perception is bolstered in other subject fields, cognitive processes in the language arts seem to differ from those in other fields primarily in that language arts teachers

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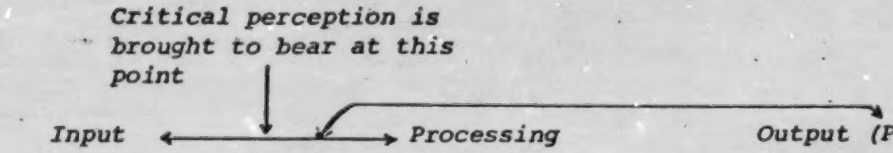
[1] Dr. Loban and Ms. Copeland stressed the oral base of all language activity; Dr. Glatthorn wished to attribute greater importance to media and Dr. Farrell, to literature; and Dr. Lloyd-Jones and Ms. McPherson focused on writing.

must bolster critical perception with the emphasis on how to mediate by language.

The following classroom model illustrates just how critical perception is brought to bear on all language forms.



I	II	III
Experience	Cognitive/Affective Processes	Expressions (specific behaviors)
Literature	Translation	Writing
Spoken Language	Analysis	Speaking
Film-TV	Comprehension	Media Creation
Interactions	Synthesis	Shift in Attitude
Role-Playing	Evaluation (Valuing: What does it mean? Why do you feel the way you do?)	Process of Choosing and Rejecting

Expression results from bringing critical perception to bear on an experience selected to make an emotional connection with the learner. Teachers put their students in touch with the tools by which they can arrive at critical perception--tools of inquiry. Thinking, writing, and reading become critically interrelated, with all matters regarding language coming to a head in the activity of composing. But whatever the language activity might be, it was repeatedly, unanimously, and strongly stressed, critical perception would entail recognition of that activity in terms of purpose, audience, intention, and occasion.

The first two points of consensus thus intertwine.

Tables IIA, IIB, and III -- The discussions centering around the tables on usage/mechanics must be viewed within the context of the position assigned this area in Table I--last in rank. Given the necessity to emphasize in the classroom the content matter of how language works--socially, intellectually,

psychologically--and in terms of that major mission, usage/mechanics was invariably conceded to be relatively superficial. However, since the participants were asked to weigh their responses in terms of the overall usage/mechanics skills deemed minimally acceptable in college, they recognized that colleges do in fact reward the ability to process the printed word in the standard language (often referred to as Edited American English). But, they maintained, the testing of usage is the testing of social class, not of educational achievement. It implies that success in college is not based on knowledge or "languaging-thinking," but on social background. They did concede, however, that students should be given the option of studying Edited American English. It is the manner of teaching it that needs correcting: it is not in itself an absolute, unchanging standard, but a dialect, a convention, whose lack should not signal inferiority.

In this light, and in view of the participants' continual emphasis on *syntactic fluency*, rather than editing, on the importance of *what* is being said, rather than mechanical conventions, on how an expression can be made more *effective* in achieving its purpose, rather than more "correct," the following tables should be viewed. The rankings reflect these basic issues. Puristical niceties (like avoiding the split infinitive or using possessives with gerunds) are eliminated in favor of crucial conventions (like punctuation that is absolutely necessary for clarity and meaning). Most crucial of all, however, is the continued emphasis on the nature and use of language in social contexts reflected in the high rank given the area of Semantics and Style.

Tables IIA and IIB, concerning the broad subcategories of usage/mechanics, immediately follow.

TABLE IIA

USAGE/MECHANICS

(USE OF LANGUAGE)

ACTUAL					IDEAL			
High School		College			High School		College	
Group I	Group II	Group I	Group II		Group I	Group II	Group I	Group II
[illegible]	3	4	2	Punctuation: appropriate use of all conventional punctuation marks *(oral parallel: intonation and stress)*	3	5	4	3
3	1	3	3	*Usage (choices within grammatical structure of language--- what the student does, as opposed to talking about forms):* principal parts of verbs, plurals of nouns, agreement, pronouns, modifiers, connectives, comparatives, and superlatives, *signalling devices, coordinating devices*	4	3	3	4
1	2	2	1	Sentence structure *(a process):* subordination; coordination; correlatives; parallelism; fragments; run-ons; ambiguous or dangling modifiers; consistency of mood, voice, tense, and viewpoint	1	2	2	2
[illegible]	4	1	4	*Semantics* and Style: figurative language, forceful verbs, active voice, consistency of tone and level, levels of writing, *appropriateness, being specific, doublespeak, viewpoint, precision, connotation/denotation, general/ specific, slant, cliches, jargon, common fallacies*	2	1	1	1
				Dictionary skills (spelling/vocabulary)	___	4	___	5
				Grammatical analysis [syntax and morphology: sentence-combining devices, theory and analysis]--for teachers and interested students only	___	6	___	6

Table IIB

Usage/Mechanics

Consensus for Ideal High School and College Priorities

	High School	College
Punctuation[1]	5	4
Usage	3	3
Sentence Structure	2	2
Semantics and Style	1	1
Dictionary Skills	4	5
Grammatical Skills	6	6

[1]The classifications are briefly listed here; they are defined in Table IIA.

Table III, which lists those skills involved in each subarea of usage/mechanics, was not discussed at the work sessions. Thus, what follows is the consensus view derived from the participants' initial rankings (Important/Unimportant) before the conference. Tied rankings occurred infrequently and only for the actual rather than the ideal situation.

TABLE III

Usage/Mechanics - Particular Skills

ACTUAL High School		ACTUAL College			IDEAL High School		IDEAL College	
Important	Unimportant	Important	Unimportant		Important	Unimportant	Important	Unimportant
				Punctuation				
				Commas to set off:				
1	2*	2	2	supplementary words, phrases, or clauses	1	2*	2	2
2	2	2	2	independent sentence elements (direct address, exclamations, interjections)	1	2*	1	2
2	2	2	2	words in apposition	1	2*	2	2
2	2	2	2	nonrestrictive words, phrases, or clauses	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	a direct quotation from its context	1	2*	2	2
2	2	2	2	clauses linked by coordinating conjunctions	1	2*	1	2
1	2*	1	2	introductory words or phrases	1	2*	1	2
				Semicolons to separate:				
2	2	2	2	within one sentence independent clauses linked without a conjunction	2	2	1	2
				two statements when the second begins with a transitional word such as				
1	2	1	2	*nevertheless* or *however*	2	2	1	2
1	2	1	2	elements which are already separated by commas but which still contain ambiguities	2	2	1	2
				Colons to indicate:				
				that what follows is closely related to what preceded: the relationship may be one of apposition, antithesis, summation, enumeration, elaboration,				
1	2*	2	2	balance, or definition	2	2	1	2
				Dashes to:				
1	2	2	2	mark an abrupt change or reversal	2	2	1	2
1	2*	2	2	set off explanations, appositions, and parenthetical words or phrases	1	2*	1	2
1	2	1	2	set off a statement of summary	1	2*	1	2
				Parentheses to set off:				
1	2	1	2	supplementary material not essential to the main statement	2	2	2	2
1	2	1	2	nonrestrictive material more strongly than would commas	1	2*	1	2
				Periods to indicate:				
1	2	1	2	abbreviations	1	2	2	2
2	2	1	2	the end of a sentence	1	2*	2	2
				Question marks to:				
2	2	1	2	indicate the end of an interrogative statement	1	2	2	2
1	2	1	2	(be avoided in indirect discourse)	1	2	1	2
				Exclamation points to indicate:				
1	2*	1	2	particular stress or intonation after a word or sentence	1	2	1	2
				Apostrophes to indicate:				
2	2	1	2	possession	1	2	1	2
2	2	1	2	an omitted letter	1	2	1	2
1	2*	1	2	*Punctuation of dates, places, times*	1	2	1	2

*Tied rankings represent equal numbers of participants ranking the skill Important or Unimportant.

TABLE III (continued)

ACTUAL					IDEAL			
High School		College			High School		College	
Important	Unimportant	Important	Unimportant		Important	Unimportant	Important	Unimportant
				Hyphens to indicate:				
1	2	1	2	compound words	1	2*	1	2
2	2	2	2	words split at the end of lines	1	2	2	2
				Grammar (Morphology)				
				Verbs:				
2	2	2	2	forming principal parts	2	2	1	2
2	2	2	2	making verbs agree with subject	2	2	1	2
1	2	1	2	using possessives with gerunds	1	2	1	2
1	2	1	2	not splitting infinitives	1	2	1	2
				Nouns:				
1	2*	1	2*	forming irregular plurals	1	2	1	2
1	2	1	2	using a plural verb with Latin/Greek plurals	1	2	1	2
				Pronouns:				
2	2	2	2	making pronouns agree with antecedent in number	1	2*	1	2
				Modifiers:				
1	2*	2	2	forming the comparative and superlative	1	2	1	2
2	2	2	2	choosing between adjective and adverb	2	2	1	2
				Connectives:				
1	2	1	2	using correlatives	2	2	2	2
1	2	1	2	using conjunctions	2	2	2	2
1	2	1	2	using *like* as a conjunction	1	2	1	2
				Sentence Structure (Syntax)				
1	2*	1	2*	Joining subordinate clauses	2	2	2	2
1	2*	1	2	Joining coordinate clauses	2	2	2	2
1	2	1	2*	Placing correlatives	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	Setting elements parallel that belong so	2	2	1	2
2	2	2	2	Maintaining consistent viewpoint (person and number)	2	2	1	2
2	2	2	2	Maintaining consistent tense	2	2	2	2
1	2	1	2	Maintaining consistent mood (imperative, subjunctive, etc.)	1	2*	1	2
2	2	2	2	Avoiding sentence fragments	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	Avoiding run-on sentences and comma splices	2	2	1	2
2	2	2	2	Avoiding dangling modifiers	2	2	1	2
1	2*	2	2	Avoiding ambiguous modifiers	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	Avoiding tangled referents and nonsense predication	2	2	2	2

*Tied rankings represent equal numbers of participants ranking the skill Important or Unimportant.

TABLE III (continued)

	ACTUAL				IDEAL			
	High School		College		High School		College	
	important	unimportant	important	unimportant	important	unimportant	important	unimportant
Diction and Style								
Using proper idiom	1	2 *	1	2	1	2	1	2
Using figurative language appropriate to the context	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Preferring forceful verbs over the copulative	1	2 *	1	2	1	2	1	2
Preferring the active over the passive voice	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Maintaining a consistent style and tone	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Avoiding mixed metaphors	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Avoiding repetitiveness	1	2 *	1	2	1	2	1	2
Distinguishing between levels of writing (friendly, business, formal)	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Other *Recognizing similar sentence patterns*	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Choosing specific words	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Connotation and denotation	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Sentence and paragraph rhythms	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2

*Tied rankings represent equal numbers of participants ranking the skill Important or Unimportant.

Table IVA -- The content areas ranked in Table IVA were generally conceded to be ones of major importance in the language arts. The rankings themselves are fairly self-explanatory, needing but a few general comments. The participants felt here a real discrepancy between the actual and the ideal, probably due to the "narrowness" of instruction generally prevailing. They themselves would ask of the curriculum 1) that students be allowed to sample enough different kinds of language use to give them the total range of possible discourse; 2) that more time be devoted to the relationship of audience, language, code, self, voice, and nature of the speaker to whatever is written, spoken, or filmed, and less time to the mechanics of the language.

The suggestion was made that language be viewed as a process. Spoken language comes first: people do not read or write well until they have first mastered spoken language. Consequently, discussions of oral vs. written language probably hinge on the point at which the process is being described. A gestation period precedes actual writing: a prewriting stage of talking, mulling, sorting. In the act of composing, an original perception is reperceived: writing about it forces the writer into precision. If an observer stepped into the process and discovered that little was being done in the classroom with the intermediate speech activity, that might help explain why the writing was going so badly.

Expressive writing, it was generally acknowledged, prevailed at the elementary and secondary levels. But its high ranking[1] could be attributed to more than mere recognition of the fact of its existence. Believing that

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[1]Expressive writing both is and should be more frequent at the secondary than at the college level; transactional writing, somewhat less. The priorities both are and should be reversed at the college level.

an important function of the school is to encourage human contact, the participants concluded that expressive writing, though it does not represent conventional mastery of content and is rarely graded, is important. Furthermore, there are universally applicable skills that transfer across the communication fields, and the distinction can be drawn between language that is appropriate for the various ranges of expressive writing and language that is appropriate for various kinds of audiences in transactional situations.

The participants also noted the developmental order involved in critical reading. Thus, literal understanding was ranked more highly for secondary school; inferential understanding, for college.

TABLE IVA

Writing and Critical Reading

ACTUAL				MAJOR TOPIC AREA	IDEAL			
High School		College			High School		College	
Group I	Group II	Group I	Group II		Group I	Group II	Group I	Group
3	3	5	2	Composing--Expressive Writing: evocative language; writing imaginatively; unique, discernible points of view	4	3	4	1
4	2	1	1	Composing--Transactional Writing: overall structure, paragraph development, effective sentences, and effective diction	5	4	1	2
1	5	2	3	Editing: proofreading and *polishing (excising, adding, heavy restructuring)*	6	5	5	5
2	1	3	5	Critical Reading--Literal Understanding: comprehension of words, recall of facts, perceptions of main ideas and organizations	2	1	3	4
5	4	4	4	Critical Reading--Inferential Understanding: drawing inferences or conclusions, identifying mood or tone, understanding implied meanings of words; *identifying writer's motives, purpose, intention, audience*	3	2	2	3
___	___	___	___	Other: *Relating reading and writing to their oral base*	1	___	___	___

Table IVB -- The consensus forged at the work session for the ideal high school and college classroom is presented in Table IVB. Groups II's revisions of the categories were offered in the attempt to define the classroom behavior.

Table IVB

Writing and Critical Reading

Major Topic Area

Consensus for Ideal High School and College Priorities

	High School	College
Composing: Expressive	5	4
Composing: Transactional	6	3
Composing: Collaborative (a form of transactional that includes critical reading and composing as a result of group interaction)	4	
Cross-Media Composing and Reading	3	
Editing	7	5
Critical Reading: Literal	1	2
Critical Reading: Inferential	2	1

Table VA -- In the following table, responses to the listing of discrete skills were weighed in terms of the overall universe of written discourse, not in terms of the overall language arts curriculum. In those latter terms, as well, the content areas of writing and critical reading were ranked highly.

TABLE VA

Writing and Critical Reading Subcategories

WRITING

ACTUAL			IDEAL	
High School	College		High School	Col
		I. Expressive Writing - Identifying Features:		
✗ U	I ✗	Expression of Feelings	✗ U	✗
✗ U	✗ U	Expression of Opinions	✗ U	✗
I ✗	I ✗	Use of Figurative Language	✗ U	✗
I ✗	I ✗	Use of Evocative Language	✗ U	✗
✗ U	I ✗	Use of Concrete Language	✗ U	✗
I ✗	I ✗	Writing Imaginatively	✗ U	✗
I ✗	✗ U	Unique, Discernible Viewpoints	✗ U	✗
✗ U	I ✗	Self-validating	✗ U	✗
✗ U	✗ U	Relatively audience-less	✗ U*	I ✗
✗ U	I ✗	Free form, stream-of-consciousness, emblematic organization	✗ U	I ✗
I U	I U	Other: *Ability to select significant details* *Responsible use of language (honesty, integrity)*	✗ U	✗ U
		II. Transactional Writing - Identifying Features:		
		A. Overall structure:		
✗ U	✗ U	central purpose or theme	✗ U	✗ U
✗ U	✗ U	organizing patterns	✗ U	✗ U
✗ U	✗ U	illustrative (examples, comparison and contrast)	✗ U	✗ U
✗ U	✗ U	analytic (classification, process, causal analysis)	✗ U	✗ U
✗ U	✗ U	argumentative (premise and conclusion, persuasive techniques, induction and deduction)	✗ U	✗ U

*Tied Ranking

TABLE VA (continued)

ACTUAL			IDEAL	
High School	College		High School	Coll
I U	I U	discernible beginning, middle, and ending	I U	I U
I U	I U	Other: *Awareness of audience* *Appropriateness*	I U	I U
		B. Paragraph development:		
I U	I U	topic sentence	I U	I U
I U	I U	completeness-use of details (supporting, descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive)	I U	I U
I U	I U	unity--avoiding irrelevancies	I U	I U
I I	I U	order (e.g., orderly movement in time, in space from particular to general, from general to particular, from question to answer, from effect to cause)	I U	I U
I U	I U	coherence (grammatical consistency, parallel structure, pronoun reference, transitional markers) *(logical connection between and among ideas)*	I U	I U
I U	I I	transitions between paragraphs	I U	I
I U	I U	Other: *Awareness of audience* *Appropriateness*	I U	I U
		C. Effective sentences:		
I I	I I	economy	I U	I
I I	I I	emphatic voice and word order	I U	I
I I	I I	variety of length, order, and pattern	I U	I
I I	I I	style	I U	I
I U	I U	Other: *Parallel structure* *Avoiding noticeable but unintended ambiguity* *Appropriateness*	I U	I
		D. Effective diction: *(for audience/occasion/purpose)*		
I I	I I	ability to adjust style	I U	I
I U	I I	accuracy and precision	I U	I

TABLE VA (continued)

ACTUAL			IDEAL	
High School	College		High School	Colle
✓ U	I ✓	appropriateness of level	✓ U	✓ U
I ✓	✓ U	ability to manipulate levels of abstraction	✓ U	✓ U
I ✓	I ✓	figurative language	✓ U	✓ U
I U	I U	Other: *Word choice* *Avoiding cliches, jargon*	✓ U	✓ U
		III. Editing - *a final process:*		
✓ U	I ✓	Proofreading { *for omitted words and as a prelude to possible revision, for transitional markers*	✓ U	✓ U
I ✓	✓ U	Revising - *rethinking, discarding, adding, restructuring*	✓ U	✓ U
✓ U	✓ U	Using Edited American English *as social markers and for readability*	✓ U	✓ U
		CRITICAL READING		
		I. Literal Understanding:		
✓ U	I ✓	comprehending words, phrases, and sentences	✓ U	✓ U
✓ U	I ✓	recalling significant facts and ideas	✓ U	✓ U
✓ U	I ✓	perceiving main ideas and organizations	✓ U	✓ U
I ✓	✓ U	recognizing relationships among ideas	✓ U	✓ U
		II. Inferential Understanding:		
I ✓	✓ U	drawing inferences and drawing conclusions not explicitly stated	✓ U	✓ U
I ✓	✓ U	recognizing author's purpose *and motives*	✓ U	✓ U
I ✓	I ✓	identifying mood or tone	✓ U	✓ U

TABLE VA (continued)

ACTUAL			IDEAL	
High School	College		High School	College
~~I~~ U	~~I~~ U	understanding figurative language and literary devices	~~I~~ U	~~I~~ U
I ~~U~~	I ~~U~~	deriving implied meaning of words, phrases, and sentences	~~I~~ U	~~I~~ U
I ~~U~~	~~I~~ U	understanding the relationship of organization to meaning *(in the relationship of parts to whole, what is left out?)*	~~I~~ U	~~I~~ U
I ~~U~~	~~I~~ U	identifying author's underlying assumptions, *purposes, motives*	~~I~~ U	~~I~~ U

Table VA is particularly interesting for the participants' emendations (indicated in italics), which are crucial for understanding the nature and ordering of kinds of composing as well as critical reading. In the matter of composing, editing, viewed as a final process, was deemed minimally important within the universe of written discourse, a clue to the source of the participants' dissatisfaction with most objective language tests: most tests of this nature seem to be assessing editorial skills.

Clarification of the nature of expressive writing also emerged: it is writing as a way of organizing and understanding one's own experience, writing as self-discovery, writing as therapy. Yet it incorporates such universally applicable skills as the ability to select significant details, to convey what is intended, to express in a manner that is adequately concrete, to evoke appropriate feelings, to use language responsibly with honesty and integrity.

These skills seem to transfer over to transactional writing where, unfailingly, the participants emphasized the necessity to *practice* rather than merely name the qualities involved, to be aware of the audience, to have a sense of appropriateness, to work within a context rather than in discrete sentences. With the emphasis on *practice*, participants agreed that writing samples would clearly be the best means for assessing writing ability. However, they did acknowledge that writing and critical reading were inextricably related. Though the exact nature of that relationship is yet to be determined through research, the participants felt that exercises in critical reading would be a suitable *passive* way to assess writing potential. They did, however, caution against an equal weighting of the components of critical reading in any such assessment. For example, there is a hierarchy within the category of inferential understanding so that more items should be devoted to "recognizing the author's purpose and motives" and "identifying the author's under-

lying assumptions," the most important skills, than to the other skills in that category.

Table VB -- Group II participants devised their own table on composing. Although in no way does it confound their original rankings, it is included here primarily to illustrate current professional thinking, which seems to view writing in the classroom from the point of view of the process rather than the product. Such a view would seem to eliminate some of the difficulties revealed by recent research[1] that arise from focusing on the product.

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[1]Richard Braddock has noted the absence of the traditional one-sentence topic sentence in the paragraphs of respected published authors, a fact that encourages a more judicious approach to the construction and placement of topic sentences. ("The Frequency and Placement of Topic Sentences in Expository Prose." *Research in the Teaching of English*, 8 [Winter, 1974], 287-302.)

Table VB

Group II's Taxonomy of Composing Skills[1] (Expressive and Transactional)

Expressive:

Writing as a way of organizing and understanding one's experience, as self-discovery, as therapy

Transactional:

Invention and probing a topic, audience analysis, purpose, occasion

Organizational strategies and devices and options in development (comparison and contrast, causal analysis, induction and deduction)

Forms of support (examples, illustrations, supporting details, use of empirical data)

Knowing how to begin

Making writing sound finished

[1]All the skills were deemed important for the ideal high school and college classroom.

IV Summary and Conclusions

Review of Conference Goals

The invitational language arts conference was held to provide ACT with a comprehensive view of the domain, one that would describe both current curricula and future ones, that would enumerate the skills essential to probable success in college writing experiences, and that would clarify the governing processes of the field. As the conference progressed, decreasing attention was given the first goal since the conference itself was only one phase of ACT's review of the language arts curriculum.[1] Attention focused, instead, on the last two goals as the ones that could most reasonably be achieved by assembling eight distinguished educators.

Principal Outcomes

The significant outcomes of the conference were mainly two-fold: the isolation of the essential language skill and the description of the underlying processes of the field. The salient points bear repeating:

1) Critical perception, which involves volition and emotion as well as intellection, is the language skill most necessary for success in educational experiences.

2) The content matter of how language works--socially, intellectually, pyschologically--is of chief importance in the language arts curriculum.

3) All language activities must be recognized in terms of purpose, audience, intention, and occasion.

4) Thinking, writing, and reading are critically interrelated. Writing forces one to think at the deepest level that the language offers, provides the reflective

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[1] ACT has conducted a comprehensive survey of over 400 ACT-user secondary and postsecondary schools, from which it has gathered data on priorities in current language arts curricula. Copies of this survey may be secured by writing ACT's Publications Department, ACT National Office, P.O. Box 168, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

experience, and demands precision. It bolsters critical reading skills for a public that may, in fact, have minimal need for writing but still has to deal with newspapers, magazines, political speeches, and the like.

5) It is no longer believed that usage/mechanics can indicate the range of language proficiency. As one feature of language factored out to indicate the whole, it has ceased to relate well with that whole, particularly as social backgrounds have shifted.

A consensus like this from within the discipline suggests some directions for language assessment. The participants at ACT's conference would welcome radically new tests. They would also welcome ones that incorporate visual media, though they recognize that such tests may not yet be feasible. But it is presently feasible in assessment to emphasize language as content and thus recognize the diversity of student backgrounds and the importance of context. And it is also presently feasible to exercise some caution in maintaining that one subelement of writing can represent the whole adequately, especially since there are no well-formed generalizations in the field--not enough is known about the subelements of writing. Finally, given the current state of incoherence in student achievement and curricular objectives, there may be a need for more tests with limited objectives. To make these suggestions is to raise questions, ones that only research and experiment can answer; the search for the answers is likely to be exciting and rewarding--for students, teachers, and testers.

Appendix 1

POSITION PAPERS

The position papers, which follow in alphabetical order, were written before the conference in response to ACT's request that the participants describe recent changes in the secondary schools and their impact on college classes. The authors share a surprising number of views. The few contrasting views which do arise can probably be accounted for by the institutional level or geographic setting from which they were perceived.

The high school climate, it is generally conceded, has been characterized by diversified materials, individualized activities, a pluralistic approach to language, emphasis on personal writing rather than transactional--all of which contribute to the lack of common experiences among incoming college freshmen.

On the college level there is general agreement that more individualized activities should be introduced to accommodate the increasing diversity of entering students. With societal pressures mounting against a general diffuseness, colleges will also have to resolve the conflict between developing vocational skills and developing expressive/discovery ones. The enormity of this task will increase if the current trend to reduce the amount of required English continues.

EVELYN M. COPELAND

Philosophies of education have for decades espoused the importance of meeting individual needs, but only within the past decade have I seen widespread effort within the classroom to either identify or to accommodate those individual needs. Two influences that have helped to effect this change are the interest in the humanities that emerged in the mid-sixties and the phase/elective courses that burgeoned in the late sixties. Both were forerunners of today's interdisciplinary studies, in which the traditional arts and skills of language often receive less emphasis than formerly while individualized learning gets more, though one need not exclude the other. The focus in diversified materials, individualized activities, and alternate time schedules is on helping students to learn according to their individual needs, interests, and abilities.

This increased attention to individualization means that students will be even less likely than in the past to reach college with a common body of scholastic experiences (e.g., classics read by the majority or principles of grammar memorized). They are likely, however, to have a greater willingness to tackle the unknown. They will tend to be inquiring, inventive, independent students who have confidence in their own ability to learn. They will often reveal an indifference to what some refer to as the minimum essentials in both speaking and writing. My guess is that they may be better read and better readers than in the past, but with the exception of the top twelve-fifteen per cent they may be ineffective writers. College should probably be prepared to take very seriously the task of instruction in the arts and skills of writing and to capitalize on students' enthusiasm for learning for the sake of satisfying

their own curiosity. Realistically, the colleges should not expect the majority of freshmen to be polished writers; professionally, the colleges should help students on the long, long road to self-discovery through writing.

Secondly, I sense a more comprehensive and pluralistic approach to language than I did four or five years ago. Dialects, for instance, are becoming a proper subject for the English classroom, and a sociological interest in the heterogeneity of Americans raises new questions about the place of standard English in the curriculum. The CCCC's resolution on "The Students' Right to Their Own Language" has teachers thinking, talking, and arguing about what they are teaching and why they are teaching it. The newer language texts are applying rather than teaching the principles of transformational and generative grammars, and the trend continues toward learning inductively.

If the high school language programs can make students aware of the diversities and complexities of language, if they can give the students some sense of what dialects are and what etymology reveals, and if they can help students find a sense of success and satisfaction in experimenting with language, then the colleges will be getting students with considerable potential for further discovering what they can do with language and what language can do with them. The implications are significant for the study of either literature or composition.

Two influences are notable in the changes that are taking place in the methods of teaching writing in the schools. First, the works of teachers like Donald Murray (*A Writer Teaches Writing* and *Write to Communicate*), James Moffett (*A Student-Centered Curriculum, K-13*), and Ken Macrorie (*Uptaught* and *Telling Writing*) are helping teachers to see writing as a process, not a product. The process puts the emphasis of writing on a

great deal of prewriting, something comparatively new in English classes. Role-playing, values exploration, and even the fun hypothesis (though "one person's game is another person's pain") are helping students discover that they really have something worth saying about things that are important--to themselves and to others. Second, I see some trend (albeit slow and often begrudging) in teachers' acknowledging that knowing grammar may not be a prerequisite for improving writing. Sentence-combining exercises in some instances are replacing the study of grammar in the composition class, and according to research (*cf. English Journal*, December, 1975) have increased the syntactic maturity and overall quality of children's writing even in elementary and junior high school classes.

That syntactic maturity has been achieved in isolated instances does not, of course, mean that the woes of freshman college composition are about to disappear. However, the colleges may find that discussing the syntax of composition will be more productive than grammatical analysis. The explanation of lower scores on standard tests in recent years may be that students are memorizing less but probing more. Problem solving, though more time-consuming than lectures, is usually more effective for young people. Colleges may also have to do more individualizing themselves to find out what their students already know and how to capitalize on the way that they grew in high school.

Other changes, sometimes less visible than those already discussed and sometimes far more obvious, are the changes brought about by new or increased pressures from outside the school and the English department. Censorship, accountability, the cry for a return to the basics (with little agreement as to what is basic), economic squeezes on budgets (resulting in larger classes, fewer materials, and sometimes shorter hours), demands of groups representing

the students' rights (civil rights and equal rights)--all are affecting the English curriculum in one way or another. The impact of these pressures on the college may be extremely subtle or blatantly obvious, just as they are in high school. They may be as superficial as students' insisting upon saying "anyone...they" rather than "anyone...he" for ideological rather than grammatical reasons, or they may be as threatening as students' rebelling against the instructor or the university as figures of authority because "You are infringing upon my constitutional rights."

DR. EDMUND J. FARRELL

During the past five years secondary English has become more diffuse as a consequence of teachers' attempts to incorporate within the curriculum a variety of new courses--courses in minority literatures, women's studies, science fiction and science fantasy, film study and film making, mythology, the Bible as literature, and mass media or popular culture. With diffusion has come the growth of multiple-elective programs, lessened concern about youngsters' receiving "a shared cultural heritage" of literary works read in common, greater emphasis on independent study and on contemporary literature, and increased specialization among teachers.

Those teachers who have become specialists appear to do less talking about the curriculum as a whole. Too, they no longer have occasion to communicate with colleagues about shared curricular problems or common pedagogical approaches to a given unit of work. Like their counterparts in the universities, secondary teachers of English who view themselves as literary specialists are reluctant to teach writing skills and to spend evenings and weekends evaluating students' compositions: such effort belongs to "the composition specialist," if such a person exists within the department.

Confusion continues over what aspects of language to teach among a host of possibilities--grammar, usage, lexicography, history of the language, dialectology, semantics, orthography. And if grammar, which system or systems? Since most secondary teachers of English have majored in literature rather than in philology or linguistics, their bewilderment is understandable: most have had only one or two courses in a field which grows increasingly complex. Further, research studies by Mellon and O'Hare have confirmed teachers' suspicions that students need not know the grammatical labels for words, phrases, and clauses in order to manipulate syntactic structures effectively. Finally, Watergate has had

an influence on what many teachers now believe is truly important in language teaching: the scandal revealed that college graduates occupying seats of power and speaking and writing mainstream dialects can be liars and cheats, can use language to deceive citizens and to obfuscate issues. A central task for the English teacher is now more that of teaching students to use language ethically and responsibly and less that of teaching them not to split infinitives, use double negatives, or end sentences with prepositions. Concomitant with that task is the responsibility of teaching students to analyze critically the language of others--politicians and advertisers, as well as literary artists.

The diffusion of the secondary English curriculum and its emphasis on the contemporary are mirrored in the present offerings of college and university departments of English. In the preface to *Options for the Teaching of English: The Undergraduate Curriculum*, a report of the 1975 undergraduate offerings in English at twenty-three institutions, Elizabeth Wooten Cowan, coordinator of the project, writes:

> British literature runs a far distant second to American literature in student preferences, with British literature before 1900 the least favored of all. Any course in modern literature is likely to be more popular than its counterparts from earlier times. Specialized period courses--for example, eighteenth-century poetry, nineteenth-century prose--vie with survey courses for designation of least chosen courses in the curriculum. In fact, the eighteenth century is the period most often ignored by students, with Victorian and early English literature in close competition. Single author, thematic, and topic courses are popular; both narrow and broad historical framework courses are not. The juxtaposition of psychology with literature invariably brings students to a class; courses in fantasy, the quest for identity, myths and archetypes, for example, are extremely popular on every campus where they are offered. While courses in film and creative writing have very high enrollments in English departments all across the country, offerings in language and linguistics, in general, do not enjoy such popularity. . . . In more cases than not, students are allowed to put together their own majors, with minimal requirements set by the department; and comprehensive examinations are quite rare.

Despite general diffuseness in the offerings of secondary and collegiate departments of English, one can not assume that *all* departments now offer students science fiction, fantasy, literature of and by women, mythology, mass media, and minority literatures: there are departments that out of conviction or inertia have chosen to be conservators of a Greco/Roman, Anglo/American literary tradition and of a Latinate description of English grammar. Too, there are at present strong overlapping forces countervailing the diffusion of course offerings: statewide assessment programs; emphases on performance objectives, competency-based programs, and "accountability"; increasing numbers of censorship cases in the secondary schools; public dissatisfaction with students' performance on tests of literacy and compositional skills; a depressed economy for schools coupled to inflated costs of instructional materials; and a "back-to-basics" movement (though who is doing the moving and what the basics are remain obscure).

Unless the economy changes appreciably and with it the public's willingness to provide more revenue for education, one can predict that course loads in colleges and class loads in the secondary schools and in the lower-division years of college will be high in the years immediately ahead and that close evaluation of students' writing will decline proportionately; that there will be fewer experiments with expensive or time-consuming innovative programs; that battles among legislators, teachers, and lay groups over control of the curriculum will continue; and that unions will speak with increasing authority about the conditions under which faculty members teach, the policies governing their retention or termination, and the compensation--direct and indirect--they receive for their services.

DR. ALLAN A. GLATTHORN

Before considering some specific changes occurring in the high school that will impact on the college classroom, it might be useful to examine briefly the two central figures in the classroom drama (or battle)--the teacher and the student.

Let me first offer a sketch of what I believe to be a typical English teacher in 1975. She's been teaching for ten years and is getting tired of teaching but sees no way out. Jobs are so scarce that she's not about to move. She has had too many inservice courses that seemed totally unproductive. She's becoming somewhat cynical about educational innovations; once she was enthusiastic in her support of the changes of the sixties, but now she feels cheated somehow that those changes did not seem to last. But she jealously defends one important change, the elective courses that enable her to teach what she wants to teach and to try to get the students she wants to have. And she genuinely wants to please those students. Though somewhat traditional in her view of grammar, she looks eagerly for the newest juvenile novel or best-seller that will appeal to adolescents. Though she worries about the fact that the students don't write well, she's a bit worried that too much negative criticism will damage their self-image, and she has become convinced that "creative" writing is more important anyway. And she has just about given up trying to teach her students to speak the way she speaks. She wants very much to have those positive feelings towards her students that "humanistic" educators have told her she should have, but there are many days when she feels angry, frustrated, and resentful towards those adolescents sitting in front of her.

And what are they like, that class of 1976? It's risky, of course, to generalize about the young, but I find it hard to resist the temptation

to pontificate about them. I like to use the word *privatistic* in talking about them, although I am sure I give the word a twist that most dictionaries wouldn't recognize. You might prefer an older term from Martin Luther, who warned his people about a similar phenomenon which he called *incurvedness*. At any rate, the general notion is the same: a tendency to turn inward, away from others, away from social responsibility; a predilection to see the self as the sole locus of value, authority, truth; an obsession with one's feelings, opinions, and needs. So today's youth seem privatistic--and such an attitude makes teaching a very difficult and frustrating profession. I also see young people as totally present-oriented, considering the past irrelevant and the future too unpredictable. I suspect that present-ism (if that's a word) has always been a mark of the young, but it seems to be especially strong in this generation. So all that matters is making it through the day, being sure that this encounter and this relationship are "meaningful." And present-ism complicates the educational process that typically deals with the past and uses a future-oriented reward system.

And what goes on between that teacher and those students? Despite the seeming diversity suggested by all those elective courses, I have a hunch that the classroom in English looks pretty much the same all over the country and that it is reasonably safe to make the following generalizations:

Writing--There is much emphasis on personal writing, poetic in form at least, that expresses the adolescent's view of the world and the self. The teacher in addition assigns about once a month some "expository" writing, usually expecting the conventional five-paragraph theme. Better students seem able after a few years of instruction to master the conventions of that theme, but even those better students do not seem to have mastered the complexities of sentence effectiveness. So the teacher usually settles for correcting fragments and other egregious sentence errors.

Speaking--The distinctions between "classroom" language and "street-corner" language seem pretty much to have been lost; only the worst obscenities are proscribed. Students speak freely in their own dialect in aimless discussions that the teacher seems unable or unwilling to direct.

Grammar--Most teachers still spend a great deal of time trying to teach students all about nouns and gerunds and clauses, convinced more than ever now that such knowledge constitutes the "basics" that people seem to want to go back to. Structural grammar washed over us and left behind in the classroom a notion that sentence position is an important clue to function; transformational grammar washed over us and left behind an idea that there are six types of sentence patterns. But the teaching pretty much is based on the terminology and definitions of traditional school grammar.

Literature--As implied above, the teacher's choice of literature is very much affected by passing teenage interests, which in turn are much shaped by the popular media. Elective courses, which turn out most frequently to be thematic literature units served up as separate offerings, will typically include one standard American classic, one juvenile standby (like *A Separate Peace*) and one media-hit (like *Eric*).

The picture looks rather dismal, obviously. There are, of course, bright spots--individual classrooms where teachers are able to teach some writing and reading skills that go beyond the rudimentary level and teach as well some skills of media analysis that seem to be so critically needed. But for the most part, I believe that the situation is otherwise: a conscientious but beleaguered teacher trying to interest television-saturated adolescents who are too bored to care about much beyond their own skins.

What does all this imply for the college classroom? Perhaps it suggests that the first year of college English instruction is a place to make a fresh

beginning. The selection process has worked to eliminate the least motivated. They are a year or two older and obviously more concerned about the serious business of getting and keeping a job. And probably they are ready for some basic instruction in how to write a piece of serious prose, how to understand and analyze an important work of literature, and how to understand the way the language works. That sounds like "bonehead English" all over again, but maybe this time we can learn how to play catch-up without being dreadfully boring and dull.

DR. RICHARD LLOYD-JONES

Changes in the high school teaching of English have so far had little effect on college classes, although I imagine that we are now seeing increasing impact. I foresee adjustments to accommodate increased diversity in high school programs and to mediate between conflicting pressures to develop vocational skills and expressive or discovery skills.

Let me begin by offering a disclaimer--I have not made a systematic examination of trends in high school education. I am reacting to hearsay evidence, to patterns of submission of works to the NCTE Editorial Board, to conversation in committees and at conventions, and to inferences from what college students have demonstrated.

The diversity in high school programs can be represented in the increase of electives and mini-courses. These stress learning the functions of literature and literary language rather than taking a tour through literary monuments. In some courses students use literature to get at nonliterary ideas. Another challenge to the monument tenders is the effort to substitute writing by otherwise ignored writers--especially from various ethnic and regional groups, but also from foreign cultures in translation. Acquaintance with these nonstandard authors is often part of making literature serve as social science or even ethics. This in turn has fortified efforts to encourage students from ethnic or non-middle class backgrounds to write in the language forms of their daily oral use--in effect adding expressive literary writing to the usual canon of formal reference discourse and persuasion intended for socially limited situations. This increase of the range of discourse being taught is socially responsible, intellectually challenging, and pedagogically therapeutic, but it has reduced the already limited time spent on formal

prose. Possibly increases in class size have also affected the time spent on writing. Overall we are less sure of exactly what reading and writing a student may have done in his limited time.

The 1960s markedly increased the emphasis given to expressive writing and to "creative" or literary writing. Part of the change may have resulted from pressures to be "relevant" and "to do your own thing," but studies of learning theory, of the nature of language, and of the nature of discourse all suggest that the free writing of the elementary schools should be continued into later education. The elective system permitted more schools time for "creative" writing courses for those students especially driven to literary productions. These students were given chances to excel in writing not ordinarily tested. They acquired additional opportunities both to understand more about discourse as a whole and to become confused about writing in particular circumstances. Increased choice has meant increased possibility for error.

The 1970s have encouraged the countermovement of acquiring more vocational skills in writing. Enrollment in literature courses has dropped off. The "turn-on" literature does not get people jobs, and reading for moral, religious, or social instruction is not explained in ways to attract practical parents. School boards are obviously concerned with writing as it confers social status and perhaps as it helps get work done, but personal discovery or even social mediation seem less important both because they are usually not measured and they aren't clearly profitable.

These changes have affected school districts unevenly, so the colleges get students with dissimilar preparation. In addition to having different kinds of excellence in different good schools, we also must continue to cope with demoralized schools, underfinanced schools, and simply misguided schools. As I said at the outset, I'm not at all sure that colleges are coping with these

changes, although I have observed a rash of equivalency testing and efforts to re-establish remedial work. These programs directed at opposite ends of the spectrum seem to vary greatly, although the remedial programs seem most often justified in terms of survival in other college courses. Even the methods of remediation may involve substantial doses of expressive writing, so I would not want to leap to conclusions about what has been missing. From the viewpoint of makers of standardized tests I think I would see incoherence in achievement and objectives and thus the need for more tests with limited objectives.

DR. WALTER LOBAN

High Schools

Working with high schools on the West Coast, I have noticed two trends. The first, I believe, represents a typical American swing of the educational pendulum. By returning to what are termed solid, basic skills and knowledge, schools are seeking stability. In English this means a concern with tradition; frequently this narrows to emphasis upon such editing skills as paragraphing, spelling, and usage. Grammar, too, would be featured, except that in most schools teachers confuse usage with grammar, teach usage under the rubric of grammar, and remain confused about the actual place of genuine grammar. They are uncertain about whether or not to teach traditional, structural, or generative grammar or some elements of all three. They also sense that pupils are confused when teachers with differing grammatical orientations replace one another over a period of several years. Not all of this return to basics is uninspired, and teachers who use this emphasis often create a sense of security in the learners. Evaluation also supports this conservative trend. Through using standardized tests which neglect oral language power and written organization of the pupils' own feelings and thoughts, school districts and state departments contribute to a narrow focus. The impact of behavioral objectives also influences the curriculum, especially where teachers have developed easily attained objectives.

The second trend, a continuation of the innovative strand in American education, manifests itself in a number of ways:

A wide spectrum of elective courses.

Concern with the pupils' responses to literature, an emphasis on the transactional aspect of Louise Rosenblatt's theory of literary growth.[1]

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[1] An excellent example: TRANSACTIONS, prepared by both the Los Angeles County and City Schools, and widely distributed beyond those areas.

Acceptance by leaders (in English Education) of the linguistic--but not social or economic--respectability of social class dialects. Rejection of this position by most teachers, parents, and school boards. No agreement or even curriculum has as yet emerged to show the action or direction schools will take (1) to help dialect speakers perceive the dignity of their own ways of speaking or (2) to help dialect speakers attain the option of using the more widely used standard forms, if they wish to do so.

Evaluation of written composition by methods other than the typical commercial tests.[1]

The resulting tension between these two trends leaves many secondary school English departments without unified philosophies; busy teachers have no time to resolve the conflicts; the result is that teachers become individualists who determine curriculum in their own classes. Widely varying points of view exist alongside one another. Literature receives a rather heavy amount of emphasis; writing and language study receive smaller amounts of time; oral language and acted drama are almost nonexistent. Because of the confusion about grammar, language study is neglected, and many teachers do not distinguish between grammar and usage. Films, television, video tapes, and recordings are considered important to the contemporary world of the learner, but they are not easily procured or used. Therefore, teachers do not fully use these aids.

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[1]The State Department of Education and the California Association of English Teachers are cooperating in experimenting with the evaluation methods used at Sir Francis Drake High School in Marin County. Essentially the method is one in which all high school pupils, grades 9, 10, 11,12, write on a common topic each spring. Code numbers instead of names are used and teachers evaluate the compositions by a set of guidelines, not knowing who the student is nor his grade level. Evaluation of actual composing rather than of knowledge about composing is considered central to this method. One of the central arguments for it is that methods of evaluation broaden or narrow the composition curriculum.

Underneath all this tension between stability and innovation, there may be found a number of developments significant enough to note:

Values education is making a remarkable entrance into English, social studies, and homemaking curricula.

Career education, much broader than vocational education, is seeking to replace, for the majority of pupils, an elitist academic education.

Oral language as a base for reading and writing is insistently emerging.

Individualized--sometimes called personalized--education has appeared commercially for the first time in history.[1]

Colleges

In the teaching of English, reconciliation of opposites is not impossible, especially in the teaching of composition. The kinds of skills often called basic tend to be editing skills, and it is useless to teach editing before the pupil has learned to compose. There must be writing if there is to be editing. On the other hand, writing that is neither edited nor organized into paragraphs will not hold a reader's attention. Both composing and editing must be taught.

There are two directions college composition might take. First, for their own good, college and university teachers of composition need to defuse the folklore reiterated so often among secondary school teachers that "the colleges demand that our students know grammar." Weak and uninspired teaching of English has hidden behind this folklore and continues to do so. To avoid fostering correctness at the expense of power, college teachers need to make clear that they want much more than the defensive traditionalists'

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[1]James Moffett's INTERACTION (Houghton Mifflin) and Westinghouse's computerized program for individualized learning (I understand it is being used by ARAMCO in Arabia in the schools for Americans stationed there).

"grammar". Otherwise they will continue to receive students who worry about spelling, handwriting, and correct agreement but do not worry about having something to say, about having a purpose and awareness of readers, and of how best to organize in terms of that purpose and those readers.

No changes in the high school or elementary school curriculum will alter what must be done at the secondary and college level. Human beings learn how to write better when they are in siutations characterized by the necessity of genuine communication. Students learn to write better when they have a desire to express something and someone to whom they wish to express it. Only then can instruction aid them with the facility for saying it. Writers must put themselves into the position of the reader; they must become sensitive to the needs and responses of the reader. From time to time we hear that something new is going to improve student writing: Christensen's new generative rhetoric, a knowledge of linguistics, a new transformational grammar, programmed instruction, or some other panacea. Each innovation of this sort may have some usefulness provided that the student writer is involved in a genuine situation of communication. But, there is no way around, only through. By through, I mean sensitizing writers to how their readers will react, devising situations in which writers will be composing for an audience they genuinely wish to persuade or impress or delight, helping them organize their material in terms of their purpose and that audience. In such learning situations, the skills of conventional spelling, punctuation, syntax, and even handwriting can be made matters of concern. Power over language is dependent upon disciplined reason, accessible and clear feeling, and an awareness of how language works for communication. The more aware students are of language in relation to audience and purpose, the more readily will they impose order and readability upon their expression. College teachers need to make clearer to secondary teachers their adherence to such convictions.

A second direction for college English is the support of rhetoric viewed as the communication of genuine feeling and sound ideas. Rhetoric has, in my own lifetime, been made respectable again by uniting it with standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Today a rhetorician assumes that arguing merely to overcome an opponent or expressing false feeling with verbal skill are signs of immaturity or weak character. What is important in modern rhetoric is the sincere struggle to distinguish shoddy from sound, trivial from significant, and to communicate these distinctions effectively. Composing in speech or writing is not just a clever set of tricks; it is an important means of ordering experience, of discovering valid ideas and rendering them more precise.

The bases for effective instruction in composition may now be summarized:

Imaginative writing provides experience in expressing and ordering feelings, ideas, and experiences and does so in highly personal ways; it contributes significantly to the students' overall development in writing. Students need a balance of imaginative writing and reasoned exposition of rigorous thought.

Students must write with genuine sense of communication; they must have something to say, someone to say it to, and a desire to say it; only then can a teacher help them organize and express it.

Students must grapple with their own experiences, thoughts, and feelings, consciously shaping them toward effective communication; learning principles and studying models will not be sufficient although they may be very useful if related to the composing.

The help students receive in generating, organizing, and expressing ideas before and during the actual process of composing is more important than the help they receive after writing.

In exposition, students need to be taught that a controlling idea is needed for composing; thinking and writing cannot be separated.

Practice in actual writing, usually limited to short compositions and aimed at specific problems of achievement, surpasses other plans for student achievement.

Teachers should plan for a progression in the attainment of specific skills of composition; this progression should encompass all the grades of the secondary school.

Evaluation of student writing and all revision should extend beyond a concern for mechanics and correctness; the heart of the matter is purpose, clarity, and vitality of expression.

The best organization of instruction relates composition to the rest of the English curriculum, to other school subjects and activities, and to student concerns beyond the school. Writing does not exist in the English class alone. The evaluation should encompass all subject areas, not just English.

ELISABETH McPHERSON

One recent change in high school English, the impact of which has not yet been felt in my own area, is a reduction in the amount of English required for high school graduation--now only one year in some schools in Missouri. Since most of the college students I see have been out of high school for at least two years, this change in requirements has not affected them; there is a general expectation, however, that three or four years from now we will be getting students with much less training in any language arts skills, but especially in writing and reading.

This reduction in the high school English requirement is partly a matter of budget -- English courses are, or should be, slightly more expensive to teach than some other subjects; partly a parallel to the reduced English requirements in some colleges -- if the colleges don't consider it important, why should high schools insist on it? but mostly, I think, it reflects a legislative belief that what goes on in English classes, or what results from students taking the classes, is not really "practical" and therefore unnecessary.

Normally I begin my composition classes by asking my students to write a short paper describing their last English class, telling me what they remember from it and what they think its purpose was. About a third of them say they can't remember anything at all; those who do remember are about equally divided between saying they "did diagramming" or "read some stories and talked about them," but they seldom remember what the stories were. Nearly all of them ignore the part about what the class was intended to accomplish. Instead, they see the activities as an end in themselves: they diagrammed to learn diagramming or they read the stories because they were

in the book. Almost all of them, indicated not so much by those first papers as by the comments they make later in the semester, believe that "doing English" means identifying parts of speech or working through handbook exercises. They continue to ask me, as students have been doing for fifteen years, when are we going to "do some English," as differentiated from talking about the nature of language, discussing the intention and effect of what people have written, or just writing all the time. Unfortunately, in my classes, this represents not a change, but a lack of change, in what many high schools are doing.

Most of the students I see have done very little writing in high school, or don't remember doing any, beyond an occasional book report. But that's not a change either; students have been telling me the same thing for more than fifteen years. If there has been a change at all, it has been toward slightly more required writing rather than less -- astonishing in view of the 150 students most urban high school English teachers cope with daily. But if my students' impressions are accurate, what they wrote has been marked for what their teachers saw as errors, with almost no comment on organization or logic or effective phrasing, and very seldom any response to what the students said in their writing. The effect has been to convince the students that communication is irrelevant to classroom writing; they see it as a contest in which they always lose, and they are, very sensibly, averse to exposing themselves more than they absolutely have to. They write as little as they can get away with.

The much publicized move toward electives or mini-courses as a replacement for a more traditional English curriculum has had no noticeable effect on the students who attend the community college where I teach. Either these electives are less available in overcrowded, underfunded urban schools or students are

simply sectioned into them without being aware that they have been offered "choices." They have had no courses in film criticism, much less any opportunity to make short films. They don't know that language has a history, or that it changes. They associate the term "dialect" only with "mistake," and their concept of language choices is solely in terms of "right" and "wrong," almost never in terms of appropriateness.

I realize that much of what I've been saying may be overly simplified generalizations. These reactions are based on what my community college students say and do rather than on the changes -- the improvements -- discussed in conferences or described in journals. The shifts that I believe have occurred in teacher training, with greater emphasis on how people learn language, how to teach reading, how people become competent writers, how to understand and appreciate ethnic literature, have had little impact on most high school classes. The lack of impact is, I think, partly because of the scarcity of jobs for teachers who have graduated from these changed training programs, and partly because the rigidity of many high school curricula makes it difficult for those who do get jobs to put their ideas into practice.

The lower achievement scores and the related "back-to-basics" movement seem to me less a result of changes in high schools than of changes in the students who take the tests and go on to college -- and, of course, lack of change in what the tests measure. If language habits result more from association and early environment than from any amount of "correcting" that the schools can do; if a larger percentage of students taking the achievement tests come from backgrounds where the prestige dialect is not spoken; if the tests continue to measure adherence to that dialect as the only standard of language ability, and often include outdated niceties no longer common even in that dialect; and if the combined influence of schools and tests makes

able students distrust their own language, then it is hardly surprising that the scores do go down.

College reaction to the situation takes three general directions. One way is to establish remedial, or developmental courses, usually without credit, and attempt to make changes, in a semester or less, that the schools have been unable to make in twelve years. The likelihood of success depends, I think, on how the remedial courses are handled. Those that concentrate on mechanics and usage are less likely to succeed than those that work on reading comprehension or, in very small groups, approach writing as orderly communication rather than a contest in so-called "correctness" -- in other words, those that take much the same approach, with more individual help, that is taken in any good composition class.

A second way, a method I heard advocated last week by the director of composition at a large major university, is simply to fail those students whose performance, at the end of the term, does not meet the instructor's conception of "college level writing." This university, the director said, offers no remedial work; adequate English preparation, as that English department sees it, is the responsibility of the high schools. Such an approach may indeed insure that the graduates of that university can produce, at the end of their freshman year, edited American English, but it also insures that preference will be given to middle class "mainstream" students, and that others will be turned away.

A third way, one that I think (hope?) is becoming more prevalent, is to accept a variety of language habits without condescension or criticism, and to approach writing as a creative act of mind which deserves a response to what is being said, not just to the superficial way of saying it. In such classes, students respond to other students' papers in terms of clarity,

accuracy, coherence, precise word choice, grace, and readability. They ask questions when they don't understand, but they are more likely to praise small successes than to condemn unconventional practices. When they do suggest that something is "wrong," the discussion moves to why they think it wrong -- to a consideration of language prejudice, of appropriateness, of purpose, of prestige. Such classes spend time on sexism in language -- why the CCCC statement was called "Students' Right to *Their* Own Language," for instance, rather than the student's right to *his* language. They discuss slant and doublespeak. While they certainly don't deny any students an opportunity to make whatever language changes, or master whatever editing techniques the students feel they want, the classes do concentrate on building confidence and encouraging clear communication, not just on the etiquette of writing.

DR. GENEVA SMITHERMAN

Perhaps the most fundamental and far-reaching recent change in the English curriculum has been a reduction in the number of English credits required for credentialing in high school and college, along with increased flexibility as to the particular kinds of English courses available to fulfill these requirements. The relaxation of requirements has catapulted this once nationally homogeneous curriculum into a highly fluid state in which the "language arts" is interpreted differently depending on local conditions. Some high schools now have a phase-elective curriculum where students select from a cafeteria of courses (more properly called "modules" or "phases" in most places using this curriculum design). This smorgasbord of generally short-term experience -- say ten weeks -- may include modules like "Film", "Science Fiction", "Acting Technique", "Black Poetry," as well as the traditional "Victorian Literature," "Shakespeare," "Expository Writing" and even, in some schools, "Usage and Mechanics." In yet other high schools, as well as in some colleges, a humanities-type curriculum has evolved where "literature and the arts" are integrated with creative and expressive productions from students. Some institutions allow students to partake of this lavish feast only after fulfilling a minimum basic English requirement (consuming, perhaps, the first year of high school or the first semester of college). Yet other institutions have fully implemented the elective concept by allowing students complete freedom of choice from among the courses provided. And some university English departments have even gone so far as to apply the elective principle to the English major requirement. (One interesting consequence of allowing student options is that everybody and they momma is now avoiding thangs like "Puritan Literature"

and the "classics" which didn't nobody never really like no way cept Miss Fidditch!)

In the midst of this rather healthy diversity, a reactionary villain called "back-to-the-basics" busily directs a countermovement. Among the troops are individual parents, community groups, employers, college admissions and job placement personnel, local and federal educational policymakers and a sprinkling of language arts teachers themselves. The English curriculum has thus far accommodated only one dimension of this movement: the "right-to-read," which you could hardly call regressive, and which, in fact, has no business consorting with the likes of Mr. Badass Basics.

While these language arts curriculum tendencies are often extrapolated and discussed apart from the socio-political context, they cannot really be understood outside that framework which moves and informs all our lives. The language arts movement-countermovement is a dialectic about which space will only permit me to offer the following.

As this brave new world moved closer to 1984, the enlightened intelligentsia (which, I assume, also includes educators) feared the awesome dehumanization and impersonalization created by a capitalist technology gone wild. All looked to the humanities to resurrect the *human* in contemporary humanity. But, in their misguided notions about "intellectual respectability, " the humanities had aped the empiricist methodological approach of the "pure" sciences. So, for example, "appreciation and understanding of literature" were being measured by objective tests, and creative uses of language like "He danced his did" were being "easily" explained by mathematically conceptualized selectional rules derived from transformational-generative grammar theory. The socially needed corrective was thus the humanizing of the English curriculum. However, the "problem" with a "humanistic" language arts

curriculum is that it helps to facilitate graduation for *everybody* -- Blacks (for whom, historically, English has been the school subject most often failed), Latinos, poor and other non-mainstream whites, native Americans and other "outsiders" in American life. Applying humanism on a broad curriculum scale has lessened the effectiveness of the school as an economic sorting institution. With credentials in hand, everybody can converge on industry, business, professional schools and other mobility-facilitating institutions screaming "Let me in!" American society is both unwilling and unready to deal with these demanding hordes of folk, especially since this new breed has gained political literacy and a sense of their collective power and inherent right to participate in the American dream.

Now the "public," which includes minority folk too, is urging a return to "good spelling" and Eighteenth Century correctness norms, but it is not because these language arts "basics" are perceived as good in and of themselves, but because lack of them is "how come they said they couldn't give my boy no job." Thus what has happened is that many of the dispossessed themselves are being fooled by the slick game of the ruling class and buying the trickeration equation: "good speech = economic advancement" when the objective reality is *ain no room at the top*. Dig that the basics-countermovement is just another in a long series of superficial barriers to keep the "outsiders" out. What those folks crying for the "basics" don't realize (although the American power elite does) is that, given the present constitution of American society, all the knowledge of the Graeco-Roman literary tradition, and all the competency in the prestige dialect in the world ain gon help you. I hope those of us in the language arts will not allow ourselves to be instruments of those last-ditch attempts to salvage an oppressive system.

DR. ROBERT S. WACHAL

I guess the real question for me is not whether the schools have changed, but whether the students have changed. Since most "real" questions suggest their own answers, it will surprise no one if I say that students haven't changed, at least not essentially. To be sure, instead of demanding their rights as they did in the late '60s, they now insist on being given the answers to social questions. "Relevance? Who needs it! I just want an A in the course." But do such apparent attitude shifts represent changes of person or changes of political style and power? "We were there back in the '60s, but we were the *silent* majority . . . then!" Whatever the answer, the real "real" question is whether schools can ever be the agents of change or whether all change, deep or superficial, is triggered by peers or near-peers in response to political, economic, and social conditions. Attitudes change; they are the fashions of thought. The kids change, five years later the adults change, five years later the schools change, but by then it's a whole new ball game, as they used to say.

Given that students have changed in the *way* they talk, have they changed in their *ability* to talk? Are they appreciably different in speaking literacy, reading literacy, listening literacy, or writing literacy from what they were five, ten, or fifteen years ago? Not so far as I can see or hear. It's difficult to discern a mean with your eyes or a median with your ears, but, fashions of dress and thought aside, they look like the same kids to me. Maybe it's because I'm changing, too.

Without a doubt, I have changed. I no longer believe in the sanctity of the standard language. I no longer believe that the only way to get an education is to read the best that has been said and thought. But in other ways, I haven't changed. I still think I know what to teach and how to teach it,

although these *what's* and *how's* change yearly. I still have utter contempt for my training as a high school English teacher. If my training was in fact contemptible, it was not because my teachers were fools, nor, entirely, because I was a fool. In large part it was because my teachers did what they did out of tradition rather than out of reason. Perhaps that's why we wrote objectives for units rather than goals for programs.

What is the job of the English teacher? Is it to teach students to understand and appreciate great literature? Yes. Does this extend to film and other non-print media? Why not? Is it to teach students to be effective communicators and communicatees, ready to create new jargon at the hint of presidential, or lesser, whim? Of course. Is it to teach students to develop their own potential in self expression? Right on! Is it to teach students an esthetic awareness and a scientific understanding of the structures and styles available in their language? To be sure. Is it to teach students the vagaries of the standard dialect to the end that they can eschew triteness and achieve promotion? You'd better believe it. What are the chances of finding and training people to do all of the above with competence, though not necessarily with equal facility? About zero, or slightly greater than the chance of finding a Renaissance man in today's specialized world. But perhaps specialization is a partial answer. Perhaps the job could more nearly be done well if the esthetic-expressive functions were separated from the cognitive-transactional functions.

In any case, if the high school English teacher is to be a Jack or Jill of many trades, she or he must be reasonably educated in those trades. Lots of literature courses, a few writing experiences, and a smattering of linguistics may constitute a reasonable general English major without in any way providing reasonable training for a future teacher of language arts and skills.

The really essential trades boil down to two members of a famous trio. The wag who defined the basics as the three R's--Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic set our primary goals for all time while rendering unto usage and spelling exactly the status they deserve. Are there critical readers who are not critical listeners? What of fluent writers who can't speak? Are they badly trained or are they victims of their own personalities? If we teach reading and writing well, can we not build the bridges to listening and speaking? If usage and mechanics are regarded as editorial rather than compositional skills, matters of polish and conformity rather than substance and vigor, need we promote elitism based on trivia? Must we, as Dwight MacDonald once said, hold the line on allowing *enthuse*, or do fighting such battles lose us the war against obscurity, deception, sloth, and other besetting sins of communication?

Perhaps changes in high school curricula have had an impact on colleges and I just haven't noticed. Maybe my observed sample is too small. Maybe I listen too much to what students have to say and not enough to how they say it, which is a kind of trap, because the two things are in some sense one. Still, I believe that education is primarily a matter of individual human growth. That schools and universities can do little more than provide favorable conditions for such growth. And that providing those conditions is a heavy responsibility in a society that professes multiculturalism while requiring social conformity. Now that thousands of new immigrants from South-East Asia are pouring in annually, we have a chance to do it again and do it right, not only for them but for all ethnic groups, i.e. for all of us.

Appendix 2

DR. LLOYD-JONES'S ADDRESS

In his keynote presentation, Dr. Lloyd-Jones provides the framework for viewing language, schools, and testing as instruments of social value, a recurrent theme among the participants. Within the metaphorical framework of the traditional terms of rhetoric, he cites examples to support the view that disorder, diversity, and discontinuity prevail. What he sees in society he also sees reflected in the problems of education, in general, and in the problems of language arts curricula, in particular. Given the current state of society, Dr. Lloyd-Jones asks what English teachers can expect of their students, of themselves, and of their discipline.

A Futurist Look at the Contexts of English

Dr. Richard Lloyd-Jones

My function tonight is mostly to be an irritant to get the discussion groups fuming and fussing and coming up with ideas. I'm to pose the problems; you're to pose the answers. I'm to provide a context in which those answers might turn up. I am a little uncomfortable dealing with futurism--I am not a reader of charts and trends--but you will perhaps forgive me if I speculate about the values implied in some recent events so you can decide where we are--or ought to be--going.

So far at this meeting we've been thinking about testing as looking backward and looking forward. In looking backward we use tests as description to tell us what the condition is at the moment. We want to find out what a person knows without raising immediately the question of good or bad. Of course, the test itself implies a value system, but the purpose is to describe accurately. The description has a high value for us because we considered the questions worth asking.

In looking forward, we seek prediction. Will this person do well enough to succeed in such and such a program? That implies that you know where you're going, that you are valuing a particular future condition. Given the changes in the last couple of decades, that may be a pretty risky thought. That kind of predicting is ordinarily limited to a fairly short time in the future. It's very much like the economic predictors which tell us whether the market is going to go up immediately, what the unemployment is going to be next month. The short-term predictions really come to very little more than the extrapolation of a line drawn on a chart. These short-term predictions seem inevitable in part because they are impersonal. Nobody intervenes, we are all swept away by them, and so we accept economic determinism.

Eventually we may go out beyond where those lines can decently be projected. We start asking what's going to happen to the economy 20 years from now? That depends on what people decide is important in their lives--whether they're going to have more children or fewer children, whether they decide to be fatter or thinner or whether, in fact, it's better to live more simply or grandly. We don't predict this by extrapolating a line. We get that intuitively, as a social critic looking around to hear what people are saying what things and how persuasively. We look for the value shifts in the society. By identifying some such shifts I hope to set up the main points of my discussion.

The schools and the language are both instruments of social value. Although we may take a school census and see how many children are coming along, what we do with the school and what we test depends on what we think the society is up to. Furthermore, language is a social instrument, and what we do in the schools is but a small part of a young person's learning of the language. When I look at test scores in the sciences, I suspect that that score represents what somebody learned in school. When I look at test scores on the use of language, I am very much concerned with what are the other social influences that affected that score.

What are some of the social influences that might concern us? How do they affect what society expects of us? Let me give an example of what I'm driving at. Consider the issue of professional accountability. In other professions we note the rise of malpractice suits. In our gloomier moments we foresee them for school teachers as well, although it is hard to relate damages to a failure to teach wisdom or the rules for commas. As for the doctors, we've heard that the modern doctor really isn't very close to his patients anymore.

He's a machine treating an ailment; there is no personal bond, so the result is viewed as a matter of mechanical accountability.

Perhaps malpractice suits and school accountability are evidence of our desire to enforce social responsibility. But you might equally say that they are signs that the cement, the glue, the personal contact that holds society together is breaking apart, dissolving, leaving us fragmented. Which way you decide to look at it--the rules of consumerism or the bonds of an organic society--makes a difference in which value system you choose for governing the school.

The issue may be one of how people without power relate to people with power. If it is a confrontation, we put more and more faith in procedures and less and less faith in the judgment of the individual administrator or teacher. We suddenly have developed a whole handbook of procedures for everything--for appointments, for promotions, for salary grants--it's far beyond the old guide to business procedures and we have to keep a lawyer at the other end of the telephone. A society with somewhat less human glue tends to distance people from one another in mechanical fairness and that puts more weight on tests and less on people.

Another symptom is "credentialism." The society requires all sorts of credentials for any job, and many of those credentials are not clearly relevant. Consider the jobs which require a bachelor's degree but not a college education. The society is preoccupied with procedure, the outward sign, the piece of paper, the credential, because it doesn't want to cope with identifying the underlying competencies which are needed. Testing procedures may substitute for other credentials, but even that is a symptom of depersonalizing.

Still one more symptom of changes in value is the issue of analysis versus experience. Language is, after all, categorical, analytic. As soon as

we start putting a thing in words, we begin classifying the experience, organizing it and structuring it. The language substitute for experience is rather different from the images and sensations of actual experience. Quite possibly we once interpreted the events of films according to the rules of narrative that we learned in literature courses. But one of the skills of young people who have become visually literate is that they live in the image and they make their transitions from image to image. They experience in the film a zen kind of meaning. They have a very much different engagement with communications and thus they may have a different sense of category and appropriate transition.

These symptoms of value change lead me to reexamine three of the traditional virtues of rhetoric: (1) hierarchical orders, (2) unity, and (3) coherence. Most of us cannot imagine discourse without them, but I'd like to suggest that in our society these values are not universally accepted. If we are to continue to worship these words, we may have to redefine them.

Consider hierarchy. We assumed hierarchy as long as western society has talked about itself. I'll not go back to the beginning; just consider the hierarchy of the chain of being, that rigorous structure of experience in which each creature has its status. The angels, the seraphim, the cherubim, the kings and all his lords, the toad and the viper had their status. One knew one's place until some rebel turned on the social escalator and people knew that they could go up and down the golden stairs. There hardly could have been a theory of evolution without a concession to mobility. You may recall the dodo bird. The shocking extinction of the dodo bird demonstrated that in god's plenteous universe certain species could be missing. The chain was not fixed and final.

Hierarchy in its fundamental intellectual sense controls corporations and government, intellectual gymnastics and social games, but democracy threatens hierarchy. The romantic notion that participation, distribution of power, distribution of decision and responsibility, and equality of position might be more important than rank challenges social hierarchy.

It's amusing to observe in major corporations there seems to be a movement to collective management. Troikas and even larger groups are running big corporations, and boards of directors are being told to assert themselves. More locally, consider the pressure for neighborhood schools. We had talked for a long time about consolidation of districts. We then saw the pressure for neighborhood schools as a ploy in the wars of integration, but I suspect that it represents more than that. It may, in fact, represent a kind of Balkanization of a community, a desire to have within a huge hierarchical system a self-determining individual unit. The neighborhood school movement isn't just a racial ploy; it's part of a larger movement for getting rid of the front office.

Another example for academic people is the Balkanization of the university. We talked about the multi-versity a few years ago, but I suggest that departments are more independent than they ever were. A loss of funds from the central administration makes life a little difficult out on the fringes, but still each academic discipline defends its own right as discipline with more ferocious enthusiasm than they did in the expanding academic universe. They are terribly afraid of somebody moving in on their turf, and that in turn suggests a kind of decay of the central authority. I think we'd have a hard time finding a college president who won't tell how his power is hedged by procedures designed to distribute power.

Yet for all of that we really haven't done away with bigness. As people talked about breaking up the oil companies into smaller units, the companies

resort to even bigger combines in order to afford the costs of searching for oil. They all operate by contract and compact to develop the new fields. The billion dollar companies have to combine in order to get enough capital to play their games. That seems to say that we're going to get bigger and bigger.

Maybe, though, that's a surface change that conceals what's going on underneath. Remember what happens with rules for fairness. As we create rules to prevent discrimination or rules to create equal opportunity, we find that they're ineffective if local. They need to have a large political unit for coverage. But rules in a large political unit are standardized. They operate everywhere in the same form despite local differences.

The same problem afflicts large area planning. It's fashionable to increase the size of planning units so that even whole states are planning units, but the bureaucratic planner must be fair, and fairness is to treat everything the same way, so you get just one pattern overall no matter what the local problems are. The local irritation caused by pressures for identical treatment works against the notion of uniform, normalized, standardized tests and rules. Decentralization, democratization, and distribution of power seem to be undercurrent forces running against the traditions of centralization and normalization. Is it also a challenge to traditional rhetorical notions of hierarchy?

Consider my second rhetorical virtue, "unity," and its counter, "diversity." Does the center still hold or do we see with Yeats that in another twenty years the civilization will fall apart and we'll have to have a new savior? Will the melting pot survive the cal' for cultural plurality? Our society has honored standardized mass education and tried to get our conglomerate population

to reading and thinking the same thing. Nationwide TV networks and naticnwide publications standardize society, turn us all into similar little droplets of water and make us all into one big pond. But individuals don't like being identical drops of water very much. That they want to say, "Look I'm different." Consequently, they cling to dialect, they cling to social customs of smaller bodies and resist, sometimes very energetically, forces which tend to homogenize them still further.

The standard argument against encouraging dialects is that they will just develop into mutually unintelligible languages. But given all the pressures for homogeneity in society, can one really believe that? Very few language variants are needed to enable a person to declare a kind of cultural diversity. The preservation of local customs and interests can be merely quaint. Still, how do standardized schools or standardized tests respond to pressures for that sort of diversity? Merely outlaw Christmas to accommodate non-Christians?

Diversity in schools is represented in elective systems. Colleges can no longer predict that students will have read any particular work. They may read pretty well, but they probably won't all have read the same things. As schools have become more centralized and larger, they have the capacity to offer more variety, so instead of becoming more homogenized they become more varied.

Parallel in literary criticism is the whole loss of the great tradition. A few years ago, we all know what everyone should have read. We understood it. Even though the CEEB reading lists went out of date fifty years ago, the schools continued to teach those works until about a decade ago. Now the lists seem to have disappeared in fact as well as in name. We don't really know for sure what everyone ought to have read. Regional and ethnic literatures are part of a necessary education in a pluralist democratic society. Nowadays

even Shakespeare may be irrelevant, although a statement like that would once have been enough to get one stoned on a public platform. The center doesn't seem to hold in the world of high culture.

In the demimonde we have so far been subjected to only three TV networks, but there are potentially eighty-eight or more channels of cable TV. These not only will permit but encourage local productions. Your apartment building can have its own TV show, and that too promotes diversity, Balkanization. It may make communities out of apartment buildings as the residents themselves go down to perform in a TV studio in the basement.

In a different way network TV has produced a society full of isolated subunits which are superficially standardized. People are no longer obliged to make contact with the outer world by going over to see the neighbors. They spend the night in front of the machine in another kind of isolation.

The pressures for diversity raise problems for people who demand "standards." Standards of whom shall prevail? The human being is unable to relate to 200 million people, but indeed needs to relate to folks who have names, maybe even needs to touch them occasionally, but if the society opts for groups with parts so interchangeable as to be easily transferred around the country, how do we reveal individuality? What kind of tests can one make if we are not permitted to make the standard of one group the standard for all? Do we make a lot of specialized tests for subgroups, or do we make tests with purposes so narrowly defined as to restrict their use?

Diversity is an emotional trap. So far we haven't really had to cope with it much because the forces of incoherence in society were great enough to allow us our foibles. But as the powers for centralization have increased, along with the Romantic resentment of hierarchical order has grown the resentment of homogenization.

The third rhetorical virtue I mentioned is coherence, sticking-togetherness. The challenge to the traditional definition can be seen in the interest that young people have shown in eastern philosophy and religion and particularly in some variety of Zen. To some extent, this is an effort to escape the categories characteristic of western society. To become immersed in experience is a way out of the categories and the clear values of traditional generalizations. Perhaps these youths are trying to substitute an undifferentiated sense of wholeness, but perhaps they like the free-floatingness, the disconnectedness of this new world. In our nuclear family grandparents disappear, the children leave home, and the houses are designed for two or three at the most. Once young parents learned about the rearing of children from their own parents, but now they have moved so far away that they learn about child rearing by reading books.

That suggests the kind of loss of traditional knowledge, a disconnectedness of family ties. Perhaps the children can draw a family tree because intellectually they know where it is, but that is not connectedness. Individuals are lost without great emotional attachments--if you will, a sense of blood. There may be many crimes committed in the name of blood ties, but maybe they are necessary emotional supports. Proxy grandparents I think are becoming fashionable.

I've also been struck by the way we are created by our roles. I've been intrigued at how my own life has become compartmentalized. The people I see in one part of my existence, I don't see anywhere else. I am created anew by the context in which I appear. When one worked at home or near home, the family was around, and your work and your family were integrated. I wonder how many children ever see where their parents work? Or whether two working parents ever share the associates of the other's working place. When I am assigned to a team to accredit a distant college, I meet seven or eight strangers from other academic disciplines, but

in twenty minutes our roles are described and we know what we're supposed to do. During our visit we're very friendly with each other, we chat about our friends and family as though they existed, we carry out our job with great efficiency, we write a lucid report, and three days later we can't remember their names. Our roles are so disconnected from our daily life that although we work as friends, when we go away, there is nothing left. That may be a tribute to our general background and training, but it also may suggest something about the lack of depth in the human contact. The teams cohere only because they don't really engage.

Some predict the reappearance of learning by apprenticeship and living in an apprentice situation. That relationship is hierarchical and connected, but we are far from it. Consider what is implied by hiring someone to write a doctoral dissertation or even a term paper. Put aside whether it is immoral or illegal, but observe that the master craftsman and the apprentice are so unconnected that the master craftsman doesn't even know what's going on.

Another symptom is in discontinuous education. To some extent it is a virtue that students do not go straight through, but go and then come back to education. Still, with the number of transfers we rarely see students who go four years to the same college. The love of alma mater can hardly persist through three or four different schools. The average American adult will change occupations four times. Geographic moves are additional. These changes lead to a kind of disconnectedness that puts a great premium on flexibility and doesn't pay much for depth of commitment.

If I have described values that are changing in society, the switches truly must have implications for the way we do our schooling and the way we do our testing. Fortunately I was not asked to provide you with definitive answers on how any of these actually work out in the schools or in tests; I

was merely challenged to make us look beyond tomorrow. I may have picked the wrong details. The feature that struck me may not really be a symptom at all, it's just a little wart on the surface of society. Then again it may foreshadow a problem of great concern, and the time to consider it is now before we have to act.

Appendix 3

THE PARTICIPANTS

Ms. Evelyn Copeland, presently Educational Consultant in English and Humanities at Fairfield University, has had extensive experience both as teacher and consultant for the Fairfield, Connecticut, Public Schools' Language Arts Program, K-12. She is currently on the editorial board of the NCTE and is the immediate past chair of its Secondary Section.

Dr. Edmund J. Farrell is currently Associate Executive Secretary of the NCTE. He has been active as teacher both in California secondary schools and in several universities. He has also acted as consultant for school districts throughout California, for the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and for innumerable conferences on English education.

Dr. Allan Glatthorn, Director of Teacher Preparation at the University of Pennsylvania, is currently chairing the NCTE's Commission on the English Curriculum. He has been particularly involved not only in teacher preparation programs but in curriculum innovations designed to meet the special needs of adolescents.

Dr. Richard Lloyd-Jones is the Chairperson of the Department of English at the University of Iowa, where he has been Director of Undergraduate Studies in English. His teaching activities have focused on the nature of writing and rhetorical theory, and he has contributed a description of performance in writing to the National Assessment of Educational Progress. His primary organizational commitments have been to the NCTE and CCCC, where he has served on the Commission on Composition, the Editorial Board, and the advisory committee on achievement awards in writing as well as editing the report of the Task Force on the Students' Right to Their Own Language.

Dr. Walter D. Loban, currently at the University of California at Berkeley, teaches graduate seminars in English Education that deal with research, curriculum, and instruction in speaking, writing, listening, reading, and literature. He was a member of the Dartmouth Conference on English and has been consultant in curriculum development for many California school systems. Recipient of the NCTE's Award for Distinguished Research, he has recently completed a research study of language development in 300 children, tracing their progress from kindergarten through high school.

Ms. Elisabeth McPherson, the Chairperson of the Humanities Division at Forest Park Community College, has been deeply involved in the teaching of composition to community college students. A past chairperson of the CCCC, she has been a member of the committee that prepared the background statement on the Students' Right to Their Own Language and is now part of a committee that hopes to produce a collection of classroom practices to implement that statement. She is also active in the NCTE, on its College Section Committee and its Committee on the Role and Image of the Women in the Profession.

Dr. Geneva Smitherman is currently the Assistant Director of the Center for Black Studies and associate professor in the Speech Communication Department of Wayne State University. Specializing in linguistics, she has been teacher, speaker, consultant, and workshop director at numerous schools and universities concerned with Black students and the educational progress. Active in both the NCTE and the CCCC, she has been particularly concerned with innovations in the English curriculum on both the secondary and college levels and with the topic of social dialects.

Dr. Robert S. Wachal is the Chairperson of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Iowa, where he is currently conducting computer-assisted studies in linguistics. His ongoing interests include psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, English as a second language, and teacher training.

Appendix 4

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